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BURUNDI
CONTINGENCY PLANNING

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Background

- The ongoing violence and ethnic killings in Burundi have generated a relatively steady flow of new refugees for Tanzania and Zaire since the latter part of last year. For example, a Burundi refugee camp in Tanzania that held some 8,000 refugees in June of 1994 sheltered some 9,000 in August, 22,000 by December, and 24,000 by February of this year. An additional 12,000 have crossed recently.
- Moreover, Tanzania was progressively receiving Rwandan refugees from Burundi who did not feel secure in their country of first asylum. Armed attacks on refugees in northern Burundi at the end of March led an estimated 55,000 to flee toward Tanzania which closed its border in response.
- At present, it appears likely that refugee outflows will continue to be relatively small and steady.
- Intensification of the violence in Burundi could lead to massive outflows and internal displacement as have occurred in the past. As an indication of potential magnitude -- the October 1993 attempted coup and resulting ethnic killings generated some 600,000 refugees and at least 800,000 displaced.
- Most refugees from Burundi would likely flee toward Tanzania, which we believe would open its border in that event. Rwanda, a major host in the past, is unlikely to be a destination. The over 200,000 Rwandan refugees in Burundi would likely head to Tanzania rather than home.
- The potential for a major humanitarian disaster in Burundi comes at a time when the international and non-governmental organizations are overstretched dealing with the current Central African caseload. UNHCR has in hand some \$54 million against a 1995 budgeted need of nearly \$300 million and has reasonably firm indications for another \$100 million only. WFP already faces a shortfall of some 100,000 MT of food valued at \$80.5 million for the region.

USG Contingency Planning

- A USAID/State/NGO team is currently in Burundi to review humanitarian assistance programs, focussing on WFP's proposal to end general feeding for IDPs, and to assess the degree of international/non-governmental organization preparedness to deal with a larger humanitarian crisis. Adequate coordination of relief agency efforts in Burundi is also a critical concern.

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UNHCR Contingency Planning

- UNHCR is reviewing its contingency plan to deal with a massive outflow of refugees from Burundi. This plan assumes that most Burundi would flee toward Tanzania and includes:
 - o Prepositioning in Kampala a regional stockpile of non-food items (NFIs) for 500,000. (Goods are currently being received.)
 - o Prepositioning stockpiles of NFIs in Ngara (70,000), Kigoma (50,000), and Uvira (100,000). (UNHCR on February 23 instructed Dar, Kampala, and Nairobi to transfer NFI stocks for this purpose, but to date very few stocks have been received.)
 - o Complement existing fully-staffed sub-offices in Uvira, Zaire and Ngara, Tanzania as needed.
 - o Deploy an Emergency Response Team to the existing small office in Kigoma, Tanzania.
- Major concerns of UNHCR (in addition to donor support) to fully implement a contingency plan include:
 - o Identifying additional refugee camp sites.
 - o Upgrading the road in Tanzania from Nyakanazi to Kigoma.
 - o Upgrading airstrips in Kigoma and Kibondo (Tanzania) to land fully loaded transport planes.

WFP Contingency Planning

- In the event of a major blowup in Burundi, WFP planning is based on:
 - o A scenario similar to that in October, 1993, in which there was violence in the interior but Bujumbura remained relative calm.
 - o A chaotic movement of Rwandan refugees and Burundi to the borders of Tanzania and (to a lesser extent) Zaire.
 - o WFP/Bujumbura continuing to operate; the port and airport would remain open, however, port and warehouse operations would slow down or come to a complete halt during the first few days.
 - o Food being moved by road or barge to Uvira/Kamanyola where 127,932 Rwandan and Burundi refugees are already being served by WFP/Burundi.

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Talking Points

- o In the event of a new, massive migration from Burundi, it is essential that countries of first asylum allow refugees to cross into their countries.
- o The USG will continue discretely to encourage the GOT to open its border with Burundi and, if necessary, accept new refugees. Concerted donor pressure, coupled with pledges of relief, might become necessary.
- o Quick access to food and non-food items is essential to an effective disaster response and we are concerned that UNHCR has not yet been able to preposition NFIs in the region.
- o The USG is concerned key roads and airstrips in the region are not adequate for the rapid movement of relief items, and urges other donors to support UNHCR/WFP rehabilitation efforts.

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